

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2367

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 6211

EXDIS

DEPT PASS SECDEF (SD/ ISL) AND CINCEUR FOR INFO IMMEDIATE

E. O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: MASS, LE

SUBJ: GOL REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REF: TEHRAN 3660; AMMAN DAO 124; STATE 101446

1. LEBANESE EFFORTS PROCURE ADDITIONAL ARMS AND MUNITIONS NOW, AS WE HAVE REPORTED, MATTER OF TOP PRIORITY AND URGENCY FOR PRESIDENT FRANGIE AND ARMY. BOTH ARE CONVINCED THAT ANOTHER ROUND WITH FEDAYEEN IS VERY LIKELY WITHIN NEXT FEW MONTHS AND WISH TO BE PREPARED, REALIZING THAT FEDAYEEN ARE ALSO TRYING TO IMPROVE THEIR MILITARY CAPABILITIES IN ANTICIPATION OF ANOTHER ROUND. MAJOR GAPS WHICH NEED TO BE FILLED INDICATED BY FIRST PRIORITY LIST OF EQUIPMENT ARMY SUBMITTED TO US AND ANALYSIS MADE BY DAO OF WHY PARTICULAR ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT ARE NEEDED (BEIRUT 5968 AND 6039). MAJOR FACTOR IS TIME OF DELIVERY BUT ANOTHER FACTOR IS PRICE SINCE GOL IS NOT PRESENTLY IN STRONG POLITICAL POSITION TO OBTAIN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVAL OF ANOTHER LARGE APPROPRIATION FOR ARMS PURCHASES.

2. IN ADDITION TO REQUESTING NEEDED MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM US, LEBANESE ARE QUITE NATURALLY INTERESTED IN
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WHAT MIGHT RPT MIGHT BE AVAILABLE FROM TTIGHBORING COUNTRIES SUCH AS JORDAN AND IRAN WHICH HAVE EQUIPMENT WHICH WOULD APPEAR AT XERST GLANCE COMPATIBLE WITH NEEDS OF ITS ARMY. INITIAL DIRECT CONTACTS BETWEEN LEBANESE AND JORDANIAN ARMIES WERE ESTABLISHED DURING RECENT FIGHTING. (BEIRUT 5521) CONTACTS WITH IRAN ESTABLISHED VIA LEBANESE AMBASSADOR TEHRAN (TEHRAN 3646) WHO IS PROTEGE OF FORMER PRESIDENT CHAMOUN, BUT ONLY AFTER CHAMOUN HAD LONG DISCUSSION (APPROVED BY PRESIDENT FRANGIE) WITH KEY ARMY OFFICERS ON WHAT LEBANESE ARMY NEEDS IN WAY OF ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT. WE UNDERSTAND CHAMOUN' S TRIP TO TEHRAN APPROVED BY FRANGIE PERSONALLY.

3. IT IS OUR OPINION THAT FRANGIE AND ARMY ARE CORRECT IN TURNING TO ALL AVAILABLE SOURCES TO ASCERTAIN WHAT MIGHT BE AVAILABLE TO FILL THEIR TOP- PRIORITY NEEDS, PARTICULARLY SINCE TIME IS OF ESSENCE AND DELIVERY DATES ON SOME OF EQUIPMENT REQUESTED FROM US ARE UNCERTAIN. WE RECOMMEND THAT DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND DEFENSE CONSIDER USE OF OUR EMBASSIES, DAO' S AND MAAG' S, AS APPROPRIATE, QUIETLY TO ASSIST LEBANESE ARMY IN DETERMINING WHAT EQUIPMENT MIGHT BE AVAILABLE FROM JORDANIAN, IRANIAN OR OTHER FRIENDLY ARMIES WHICH COULD MEET LEBANESE NEEDS AND TIMETABLE AS OUTLINED TO US. SECRECY IS, OF COURSE, OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE. IF SUITABLE EQUIPMENT, IN GOOD CONDITION, AVAILABLE ON TIMELY BASIS FROM SOURCES OTHER THAN USG, THIS COULD ALSO HAVE POLITICAL ADVANTAGES FOR GOL.

4. AS TO SPECIFIC HUNTER DEAL FROM JORDAN, LEBANESE AIR FORCE ALREADY HAS THREE OF THE FOUR JORDANIAN HUNTER TYPES. THEREFORE MAINTENANCE AND LOGISTICS WOULD BE FACILITATED BY PROCUREMENT IDENTICAL EQUIPMENT AND NO PILOT TRANSITION REQUIRED. HOWEVER, THERE NO INDICATION OF CONDITION JORDANIAN AIRCRAFT WHICH DEALER APPARENTLY INTENDS TO SELL TO LEBANESE (?) AS IS. GIVEN SUPERIORITY OF A-4 EVEN IF PRICED SLIGHTLY HIGHER AND SIMILAR LEAD TIMES, HUNTER DEAL OUTSIDE OF PROCUREMENT AIRCRAFT ALREADY ON LEBANESE INVENTORY WOULD APPEAR ADVANTAGEOUS ONLY IF AIRCRAFT COULD BE DELIVERED NEAR FUTURE IN GOOD OPERATING CONDITION AT LOW PRICE. THERE WOULD ALSO BE A LOCAL POLITICAL ADVANTAGE BUT NOT A DECISIVE ONE FOR LEBS TO HAVE BRITISH
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RATHER THAN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT. WE DO KNOW COMMANDER LEBANESE AIR FORCE WANTS A-4' S AND FAILING THAT F-5 ' S. AS DEPARTMENT INDICATES (STATE 101446) WE NEED MORE INFORMATION BEFORE PROPOSAL CAN BE CONSIDERED AND CERTAINLY BEFORE RAISING WITH LEBANESE WHICH WE PRESUMABLY SHOULD DO BEFORE FINAL DECISION MADE AS TO SALE MAP EQUIPMENT. SUCH CONSULTATION WILL BE ALL THE MORE NECESSARY IF IRANIANS

MAKE F-5'S AVAILABLE.
HOUGHTON

NOTE BY OC/ T: NOT PASSED SECDEF AND CINCEUR.

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